

Program Mission

The UCD MPH Program has as its core mission the education of future leaders in public health. In so doing we serve the needs of our main constituents: public health practitioners wishing to develop further professional skills, public health agencies in need of trained public health practitioners, and the community at-large, which benefits from having a well trained professional public health work force.

UCD MPH Program Mission:

Our mission is to develop the public health leaders of the future by providing a high-quality Masters degree curriculum in partnership with the public health community.

We accomplish this by drawing on the unique resources of the UCD MPH Program. These include the collaborative efforts of the School of Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine, and other academic units, with strength in general public health, agricultural and rural health, reproductive health, cancer, women's health, health disparities, epidemiologic and biostatistical methodology, infectious and zoonotic diseases, health economics, health-care quality and outcomes, and others. Second, we promote a practical public health focus through our historically strong partnership with federal, state, and local public health communities, including the California Department of Health Services, in teaching, student mentorship and field placements, research, direction, and support for the UCD MPH Program.

The unique strengths UC Davis brings to this task are manifold. Among the most important is our proximity to and historical partnership with the California State Department of Health Services (CDHS). The CDHS is the largest health department in the nation. Its talent bench is deep and broad, with cutting-edge programs in tobacco control, chronic disease, nutrition, maternal and child health, infectious diseases, and other areas of public health.

The UCD Department of Public Health Sciences, the administrative home of the UCD MPH program, has a long history of fruitful collaboration with the CDHS. Indeed, one of the past department chairs was previously the Director of the CDHS. CDHS personnel have played a key role in the development of the UCD MPH Program, including planning, teaching of courses, preceptoring MPH students for Practice Placements, and financial support. Among state health departments, CDHS holds a preeminent leadership position, and the UCD MPH program is uniquely situated to capitalize on the educational and research benefits that accrue.

UCD is one of the few institutions that is home to both a medical and veterinary medicine school. The UCD MPH program is unique in that it is jointly sponsored by the School of Medicine and School of Veterinary Medicine. This partnership is a major strength when

addressing human health issues related to nutrition, zoonotic infectious diseases, and bioterrorism. UCD also hosts a number of academic units focusing on important problems in public health. These include the Western Center for Agricultural Safety and Health; Graduate Groups in Epidemiology, Nutrition, Pharmacotoxicology, and others; the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health; the Center for Advanced Studies in Nutrition and Social Marketing; the Cancer Research Program; the Violence Prevention Research Program; and the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care. Others include the MIND Institute, focusing on childhood neurological development, and the Genome Center. The campus's many strengths attract a dynamic faculty and high-caliber students, contributing importantly to UCD's academic vigor.

Program Goals and Objectives

The programmatic goals for the UCD MPH program flow naturally from the Mission Statement cited above. The major goals lie in the areas of instruction, research, and service. Each of the goals is supported by specific objectives describing how the program intends to realize its goals, and thereby carry out its mission.

Instructional Goals:

1. Educate MPH students in the core public health content areas necessary for a career and leadership in public health.
2. Provide practicum placements with the public health community as a setting for integrating theory and practice for locally relevant public health problems.
3. Encourage partnership with School of Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine, other campus faculty, and the public health community in development and delivery of program curriculum.
4. Provide continuing education with and for the local medical and public health community.

Instructional Objectives:

- 1a. Require satisfactory completion of identified coursework in the five core areas of public health: epidemiology, biostatistics, health services administration, environmental and occupational health, and social and behavioral sciences.
- 1b. Require participation in the Topics in Public Health Seminar featuring leading professionals and issues in public health.
- 1c. Require satisfactory completion of three courses in an identified Area of Emphasis focusing on a specific area of public health.
- 2a. Require satisfactory completion of a practicum.

- 3a. Include faculty from the School of Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine, and the California Department of Health Services on curricular development committees and as co-faculty for selected core courses.
- 4a. Provide an annual Continuing Education symposium drawing for community practitioners.

Research Goal:

1. Maintain and support a program of research addressing public health.

Research objectives:

- 1a. Develop or maintain at least one current public health research project for each faculty instructor of record in the core MPH courses.

Service Goals:

1. Collaborate with institutional partners by providing consultation and student involvement with faculty mentorship for study and improvement of public health programs.
2. Establish linkages with public health and community organizations through field placements, research, and other activities.

Service Objectives:

- 1a. Each of our MPH students will complete a Practice Placement as Culminating Experience in which they obtain hands-on experience working with a local or state public health agency or program and including UCD faculty mentorship. Through this experience, our students and faculty will provide service to the public health community while gaining valuable skills.
- 2a. Encourage service activities in accordance with existing campus professional advancement requirements (for faculty) and by promoting a culture of community service through programmatic teaching and research activities (for faculty and students).

Learning objectives

The UCD MPH Program has detailed learning objectives for each course as well as global learning objectives for the program as a whole. The UCD MPH Program has adopted programmatic learning objectives adapted from core competencies set forth by the Council of Linkages between Academia and Public Health Practice (www.trainingfinder.org/competencies/list_nolevels.htm). These core competencies were developed over a decade-long process involving numerous individuals and organizations in public health. In keeping with our mission to educate today the public health professionals of tomorrow, we believe that these consensus competencies should form the basis of the learning

objectives for our program. Each of the Areas of Emphasis shares these same learning objectives, although their realization is in a setting related to their Area of Emphasis. The learning objectives are organized into eight domains, shown below. Students master these objectives in the course of class work and the Practice Placement (EPP 297).

Domain 1: Analytic/Assessment Skills

- Defines a problem relevant to the chosen Area of Emphasis in public health
- Determines appropriate uses and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative data
- Selects and defines variables relevant to defined public health problems
- Identifies relevant and appropriate data and information sources
- Evaluates the integrity and comparability of data and identifies gaps in data sources
- Applies ethical principles to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information
- Partners with communities to attach meaning to collected quantitative and qualitative data
- Makes relevant inferences from quantitative and qualitative data
- Obtains and interprets information regarding risks and benefits to the community
- Applies data collection processes, information technology applications, and computer systems storage/retrieval strategies
- Recognizes how data illuminate ethical, political, scientific, economic, and overall public health issues

Domain 2: Policy Development/Program Planning Skills

- Collects, summarizes, and interprets information relevant to an issue in the chosen Area of Emphasis in public health
- States policy options and writes clear and concise policy statements
- Identifies, interprets, and implements public health laws, regulations, and policies related to specific programs
- Articulates the health, fiscal, administrative, legal, social, and political implications of each policy option
- States the feasibility and expected outcomes of each policy option
- Decides on the appropriate course of action
- Develops a plan to implement policy, including goals, outcome and process objectives, and implementation steps
- Translates policy into organizational plans, structures, and programs
- Prepares and implements plans
- Develops mechanisms to monitor and evaluate programs for their effectiveness and quality

Domain 3: Communication Skills

- Communicates effectively both in writing and orally, or in other ways
- Solicits input from individuals and organizations
- Advocates for public health programs and resources
- Leads and participates in groups to address specific issues
- Uses the media, advanced technologies, and community networks to communicate information
- Effectively presents accurate demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information for professional and lay audiences

Domain 4: Cultural Competency Skills

- Utilizes appropriate methods for interacting sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds, and persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences
- Identifies the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in determining the delivery of public health services relevant to the chosen Area of Emphasis in public health
- Develops and adapts approaches to problems that take into account cultural differences

Domain 5: Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

- Establishes and maintains linkages with key stakeholders relevant to the chosen Area of Emphasis in public health
- Utilizes leadership, team building, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills to build community partnerships
- Collaborates with community partners to promote the health of the population
- Identifies how public and private organizations operate within a community
- Accomplishes effective community engagements
- Identifies community assets and available resources
- Develops, implements, and evaluates a community public health assessment
- Describes the role of government in the delivery of community health services

Domain 6: Basic Public Health Sciences Skills

- Defines, assesses, and understands the health status of populations, determinants of health and illness, factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, and factors influencing the use of health services
- Understands the historical development, structure, and interaction of public health and health care systems
- Identifies and applies basic research methods used in public health
- Applies the basic public health sciences including behavioral and social sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental public health, and prevention of chronic and infectious diseases and injuries
- Identifies and retrieves current relevant scientific evidence
- Identifies the limitations of research and the importance of observations and interrelationships

Domain 7: Financial Planning and Management Skills

- Develops and presents a budget for a Practicum Project relevant to the chosen Area of Emphasis in public health
- Manages the Practicum Project within budget constraints
- Monitors program performance
- Understands cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and cost-utility analyses

Domain 8: Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

- Creates a culture of ethical standards within organizations and communities
- Helps create key values and shared vision and uses these principles to guide action
- Identifies internal and external issues that may impact delivery of essential public health services (i.e., strategic planning)
- Facilitates collaboration with internal and external groups to ensure participation of key stakeholders
- Promotes team and organizational learning

Public Health Values Animating the UCD MPH Program

The UCD MPH Program commits itself to public health values, concepts, and ethics underlying our mission to “educate today the public health leaders of tomorrow.” Chief among these values are:

- **Health:** The paramount public health value is health itself. Good health is, if not an absolute prerequisite, an important basis for a happy and productive life. Public health practitioners have responsibility to promote conditions conducive to good health in the population.
- **Community:** The community is the fundamental unit in which public health is practiced. Interventions designed to improve health, while ultimately affecting individuals, are nevertheless focused on populations and communities. Public health practitioners must also be a part of the communities for which they care.
- **Respect for individuals:** While focusing on the community as a whole, conflicts may arise in which the freedom of individuals is affected. Public health practitioners must carefully consider the dignity of individuals and work with communities in a manner to minimize deleterious effects for individuals.
- **Professionalism:** Public health practitioners must maintain high standards for their work. This applies to those engaged in education, research, and practical application. It includes the necessity of remaining apprised of important developments in the field and abiding by generally recognized ethical standards in the conduct and publication of research. The effectiveness of the public health workforce is closely associated with its public standing and reputation. Failure to maintain high professional standards of quality, honesty, and compassion will inevitably lead to decreased effectiveness and unnecessary harm to the public’s health.